## **VERMONT**

## Workforce Development Council

## **Executive Committee**

## NOTES 5/17/10

 Green Construction IECE Report Review - Chip reviewed the IECE Phase One Green Construction Report. He reminded the members that in an IECE Phase One report the goal is to identify and consult with a group of businesses to determine how they see the industry developing over the next few years, if they have training needs in common, what their training needs might be, and how these might be addressed. He stated that business participation was very good and pointed to the list of participants on p. 6 of the report. In addition, the participants expressed interest in forming a formal group to address green skill needs in this sector. The decision was made to focus in on the green aspect of the construction sector, rather than the broader green sector, because experience has shown that employer participation, which is critical to the ability to get good information about education and training needs, is difficult to build and maintain if the employers do not feel their particular needs are being addressed. In fact, Chip commented that even this group of employers discussed splitting into two committees, one for residential construction and one for commercial construction. It was agreed that this was not a good way to proceed, but it make the point.

In brief, the premise of the report is that although the Construction sector has been in decline for several years, in past economic cycles it has always rebounded to pre-recession levels of employment. He commented that media attention is being paid to the observation that as businesses emerge from the current recession they will not be doing the same work in the same way as before the recession. This is certainly true in the construction sector where energy costs and environmental factors are forcing change and creating new opportunities.

The rebound of this sector to previous levels of employment over several years is expected to account for several thousand new positions. The report indicates that the demand for "green" training will be driven by new skill requirements and will effect those currently employed, experienced but unemployed workers who will be recalled, and new entrants into the workforce. The report goes on to identify Challenges and Solutions on p.13 that can be the basis for further work.

The report points to the strategies the WDC has identified more generally of; short term, quick turn-around skill training, medium term workforce investments through the CTE system, and building for the long term through improved career awareness and the development of secondary/postsecondary career pathways.

The report will be distributed to the participants and other interested parties, and DOL, DOE and the WDC should meet to discuss next steps.

• Legislative Action on Workforce Development - Pat reviewed Act 792 as it addressed workforce issues and the WDC and the WIBs. Although the final draft of the as-passed legislation is not yet available, several things are called for in the Legislation that the WDC should consider. The Commissioners of DOL and DOE are directed to develop performance goals and measures for the Next Generation Adult Technical Education Program, the WDC "may" conduct a study of WIB effectiveness, and the Vermont Training program is called upon to develop new performance measures and reporting requirements. Tim suggested that we bring someone in from outside to run the WIB study as a fresh set of eyes may help us address this long-standing issue. There was discussion of the possibility of using Jim Masland and Nancy Burzon for this activity because they have a background in the area.

N.G. WETF programs continue to be funded but with a 5% reduction. The Act also includes language to the effect that the WIB duties are transferred to the Tech Centers, rather then to a partnership with the RDCs and RPCs as contemplated in the Challenges to Change Report. There is also a "Notwithstanding" section that authorizes the WDC to re-authorize existing WIBs, but in the spirit of the Challenges for Change report funding will be competitive and performance accountability will be the highest priority. Jerry commented that increasing focus on outcomes and measures is a positive development. There was discussion of exactly what the outcomes for WIBs should be because their work is primarily based on collaborative approaches to improving training services and assessing employer training needs. Jim commented that we have provided technical assistance to the low performing WIBs over the past year which has provided them a fair opportunity to improve their performance. If there are still regions that are not achieving the necessary performance, the best step my be to cut their funding and send a message across the State that performance is expected.

Discussion moved to how we should prioritize the work of the WIBs to give them direction. These should be reflected in the funding application in key areas including; assessing employer needs, improving the effectiveness of service delivery to individuals, and improving the career awareness of youth and adults.

Once the final legislation is available we will need to review the language and understand the legislative intent, and begin communicating the new expectations the staff and providers.

Chip will draft a preliminary outline of a WIB application for review by the members.

The next meeting will be June 21, 2:30 at DOL in Montpelier.